

Survey Shows the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Gaining in Public Trust and Confidence

RICHLAND, Wash., April 17, 1995 -- A survey conducted in the last quarter of 1994 by Washington State University shows that DOE efforts to decrease secrecy and increase public participation are paying off in greater trust and confidence among the people who deal most frequently with the agency. The university conducted the first trust and confidence survey in 1992 at the request of DOE. The attitudes of stakeholders toward the Department showed improvements in all categories in the new survey. Trained interviewers from the university's Social and Economic Research Center conducted the telephone surveys.

More than 300 surveyed stakeholders -- those with a stake in the Department's defense programs, radioactive waste and environmental cleanup missions -- include state and local governments, hospitals and universities, industry and environmental groups, and labor unions. "These measurements of our progress are encouraging and validate the time and effort we've put into building partnerships with our customers," said Secretary of Energy Hazel O'Leary. "What is clear, however, is that we have a long way to go to develop the open, honest and productive relationship with the public that we want and need. I don't want anyone in the Department thinking this improvement means we can relax. Instead it means we're on the right track, especially with our openness initiative, site advisory boards and public participation efforts," she concluded.

1994 Survey Result Highlights:

63% agree DOE provides all relevant unclassified information to the public, an increase of 23 percentage points over 1992.

51% agree DOE can be counted on to do the right thing, a 17% improvement over 1992.

63% agree DOE makes a good faith effort to treat everyone even handedly, an 8% increase over 1992.

67% agree DOE tries hard to keep promises, a 7% improvement over 1992.

58% also believe DOE manages its functions better than some other agency or department could.

Survey results in detail are available upon request.

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Department of Energy

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